Curriculum Handbook *for* **Parents**

2005–2006

Catholic School Version

GRADE 8 EIGHT

Alberta EDUCATION

Alberta Education

This document, along with most Alberta Education documents, can be found on the Web site at **http://www.education.gov.ab.ca**.

Parent documents referenced in this handbook, along with most Alberta Education documents, are available for purchase from:

Learning Resources Centre
12360 – 142 Street
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, T5L 4X9
Telephone: 780–427–2767
Toll free: 310–0000 (inside Alberta)
Fax: 780–422–9750
Internet: http://www.lrc.education.gov.ab.ca

Telephone numbers of branches referred to in this handbook can be reached, toll free inside Alberta, by dialing 310–0000.

Aboriginal Services Branch
Telephone: 780–415–9300
Fax: 780–415–9306
E-mail: asb@gov.ab.ca

Curriculum Branch
Telephone: 780–427–2984
Fax: 780–422–3745
E-mail: curric.contact@edc.gov.ab.ca

French Language Services Branch
Telephone: 780–427–2940
Fax: 780–422–1947
E-mail: LSB@edc.gov.ab.ca

Learner Assessment Branch
Telephone: 780–427–0010
Fax: 780–422–4200
E-mail: assess.contact@edc.gov.ab.ca

Learning and Teaching Resources Branch
Telephone: 780–427–2984
Fax: 780–422–0576
E-mail: curric.contact@edc.gov.ab.ca

Learning Technologies Branch
Telephone: 780–674–5350
Fax: 780–674–6561
E-mail: ltbgeneral@gov.ab.ca

- For information about LearnAlberta.ca
  Telephone: 780–415–8528
  Fax: 780–422–9157
  E-mail: LearnAlberta.Contact@edc.gov.ab.ca

Special Programs Branch
Telephone: 780–422–6326
Fax: 780–422–2039
E-mail: SpecialEd@edc.gov.ab.ca

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Curriculum Handbook *for* **Parents**

2005–2006

Catholic School Version

GRADE **8**

This Curriculum Handbook provides parents with information about the Grade 8 curriculum. It includes:

- selected learning outcomes for each subject area from the provincial curriculum
- links to the Alberta Education Web site where more information can be found
- information on personal and career development and planning for senior high school
- a feedback form.

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Message from the
Minister of Education

As a former teacher, I know first-hand that it takes a community to educate a child and that parents play a vital role on a child's learning team. Helping your children do well in school prepares them for a successful future, both in school and in life.

Alberta Education developed the *Curriculum Handbook for Parents* to help you in this regard. This series of handbooks contains information on what your child will learn in the classroom, as well as the education goals set for this school year.

Our education system is designed to help students realize their individual potential. As we celebrate our province's Centennial, we can be proud that our basic education system is one of the best in the world. Our students continue to achieve outstanding results on both national and international assessments—an achievement made possible through the combined efforts of our students, parents, teachers, and the broader learning community.

I encourage you to read this handbook closely, and to discuss any questions you may have with your child's teacher(s).

Gene Zwozdesky

Gene Zwozdesky
Minister of Education
Deputy Government House Leader

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Dear Parents and Guardians:

On behalf of the Catholic Bishops of Alberta, I welcome this opportunity to affirm you in your role as parents in the education of your children and wish to express my appreciation to the Government of Alberta and Alberta Education for their updated Kindergarten to Grade 12 Curriculum Handbooks for Parents.

The Church has always recognized that you, parents, are the first and primary educators of their children, especially with regards to education in the faith. Your role as parents is vital in the life of the Church, ensuring that the Gospel is truly lived in the context of your family and in the life of our schools and communities. Today, more than ever, your role is vital in working with our schools to continue to provide the best possible education for our children.

To those of you who have entrusted your children to a Catholic school be assured that it is with great respect for these facts that we support you in your role. I encourage you to work closely with our Catholic schools by joining your local school councils or parent groups. Assist young men and women, boys and girls, to understand themselves as moral persons living the way of Christ through the experience and teaching of the Catholic Church. Be a strong voice for the Catholic identity of schools. In this regard, you will share in a concrete way in the central mission of the Church which is to proclaim Jesus and his Gospel in the world today and, in so doing, hand on our faith to our children.

I commend Alberta Education for providing these updated Curriculum Handbooks for Parents. They provide a comprehensive presentation of the content and expectations of the Religious Education Program approved by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. They reflect the essential character of Catholic schools as communities of learning.

May their use be a source of ever-greater faith, hope and love in all of our communities throughout Alberta.

Sincerely,

+ Thomas Collins

✠ Thomas Collins
Archbishop of Edmonton
President, Alberta Conference of Catholic Bishops

8421 – 101 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T6A 0L1 • Tel.: (780) 469–1010 • Fax: (780) 465–3003

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Information for Parents

Introduction

Web site links for further information are provided throughout the handbook.

Students learn in a variety of environments—in their homes, schools and communities. Parents, teachers and community members form a partnership to assist this learning.

When parents know what children are studying at school, they can provide better home support for their children's learning. The *Curriculum Handbooks for Parents* have been designed to assist parents in participating in their child's education by fostering an understanding of what students learn at each grade level.

Learning in Alberta

Schools provide students with a broad educational program that helps them:

- develop knowledge, skills and attitudes in a variety of subject areas
- demonstrate critical and creative thinking skills in problem solving and decision making
- demonstrate competence in using information technologies
- know how to learn and work independently and as part of a team
- develop desirable personal characteristics and the ability to make ethical decisions
- demonstrate initiative, leadership, flexibility and persistence
- have the desire and realize the need for lifelong learning.

Schools also prepare students to make positive contributions to society through communities, the workplace and/or post-secondary studies.

Within the context of Catholic schools, the curriculum in all of its aspects—content, the teaching process, and the total school environment—reflect the values of faith, hope, charity, forgiveness and justice as found in the gospels and the message of Jesus Christ as understood by the Catholic Church.

Teachers make a number of decisions when planning for classroom instruction. Within any group of students, there is a range of individual differences. Teachers use the learning outcomes of the provincial curriculum to meet the needs and interests of their students and to make connections across subject areas. They choose resources, equipment and materials to help students achieve the learning outcomes. Teaching methods and schedules vary from school to school and from class to class to meet the diverse learning needs of students.

In Catholic schools, there are many opportunities for integrating gospel values and nurturing the presence of God in our midst within the curriculum. Teachers will determine where religious education and Church teaching can be integrated with other subjects.

Alberta Education assists teachers by reviewing and selecting the best possible resources, such as textbooks, videotapes and computer software, for all subject areas. Authorization of resources by Alberta Education indicates that the resources meet high standards and can help students achieve the learning outcomes. Teachers can choose other resources, as long as they follow school board policy.

http://www.lrc.education.gov.ab.ca

Authorized resources are available for purchase from the Learning Resources Centre (LRC).

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Helping Your Child at Home

Here are some important pointers for you to help your child learn.

- Be positive and encouraging in your approach to learning. It will help your child feel confident and enthusiastic about success.
- Talk to your child about schoolwork, and help with homework when you can.
- Help your child set realistic goals, and discuss progress in an encouraging way.
- Connect your child's schoolwork with everyday life, and use these opportunities for problem solving in everyday situations.
- Keep in touch with teachers about your child's progress, including successes and achievements, not just concerns.

The following resources may help you. Check your child's school for availability.

These resources are available for purchase from the Learning Resources Centre (LRC). Order online at http://www.lrc.education.gov.ab.ca

- *Make School Work for You: A Resource for Junior and Senior High Students Who Want to Be More Successful Learners* – Information on knowing yourself, getting organized, making every class count, test taking, presenting learning, getting along with others and staying motivated.
- *The Parent Advantage: Helping Children Become More Successful Learners at Home and School, Grades 1–9* – Strategies parents can use to help their child improve organizational, reading, writing, spelling, mathematical, test taking and project skills at the grades 1–9 levels.

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/parents/mathprbk.pdf

- *Working Together in Mathematics Education* – Ways parents can support student learning in mathematics.

http://www.learnalberta.ca

- *LearnAlberta.ca* Web site – Online multimedia learning resources that directly relate to the Alberta programs of study.

http://www.2learn.ca/

- *TELUS 2Learn* Web site – An education/business partnership that provides Internet inservice, support and information for Alberta teachers, students and parents.

School Councils

Schools, parents and communities all play an important role in education. School councils are designed to give parents, students, teachers and other community members meaningful involvement in decisions about policies, programs and services and the allocation of funds. Each school council determines its own level of involvement, depending on local needs. Parents can get more information on how to get involved by contacting their local school or the Alberta Home and School Councils' Association (AHSCA).

http://www.ahsca.ab.ca

School Fees and Fundraising

Decisions regarding school fees and fundraising are made by the local board or by the school principal in consultation with the school council within policy guidelines established by the school board. In September 2000, the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) developed and provided guidelines to school boards to assist boards in establishing appropriate local policy.

http://www.asba.ab.ca/services_for_boards/policy_advisories_fund.html

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School Fees

http://www.asba.ab.ca/services_for_boards/policy_advisories_fees.html

A primary objective is to ensure that fees are not being charged for core items. The *School Act* allows for certain fees to be collected for alternative programs, transportation, or supplies and materials provided for the student's personal use or consumption; this may include such things as calculators, locker rentals, student planners and computer diskettes. The fees charged are on a cost recovery basis.

The Alberta School Boards Association school fee advisory recognizes that fees should be waived for those who cannot afford them, and that no student should be prohibited from participating.

Fundraising

Parents are not to fundraise for core items such as textbooks. Some fundraising is appropriate for things like athletic uniforms, field trips, and other extras that staff and parents want for their schools. Participation in fundraising activities should be voluntary. No student should be excluded from an event or program because the parents could not contribute.

School Choice

Choice is one of the important principles of Alberta's education system. When it comes to selecting a school, parents and students can choose from a wide range of options. They can select from public schools, Catholic schools, Francophone schools, private schools, and charter schools. They can also access a number of unique and innovative programs—including online schools. Parents can also opt to home school their children.

Information about Curriculum

Alberta has one of the best education systems in the world. One of the many reasons is a centralized, high quality curriculum that outlines what students are expected to learn and be able to do, in all subjects and grades. Alberta's curriculum is designed to help students achieve their individual potential and create a positive future for themselves, their families and their communities.

Accessing Information

Parents can access information about the curriculum and learning resources in a number of ways:

- Contact teachers or school administrators.

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/parent.asp

- **Curriculum Handbooks** contain selected outcomes for each subject area from the Alberta programs of study. They provide a more detailed picture of each year. This Curriculum Handbook is one of a set from Kindergarten to senior high school produced in general and Catholic versions, and in French. They are available on the Alberta Education Web site or for purchase from the LRC.

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/parent.asp

- **Curriculum Summaries** for each grade level provide a brief overview of each year. The summaries are available on the Alberta Education Web site.

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http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubjecv/

- In Alberta, the provincial curriculum is organized into **Programs of Study**. They contain learning outcomes for each subject area from Kindergarten to Grade 12. They are legal documents that outline why the educational program is offered, what students are expected to learn and the basic principles about how students are to achieve the required knowledge, skills and attitudes. School authorities use the *Programs of Study* to ensure that students meet provincial standards of achievement. However, they have flexibility to decide how to teach the curriculum and the order in which it is taught. They are available on the Alberta Education Web site or for purchase from the LRC.

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/lrdb

- The Authorized Resources Database on the Alberta Education Web site lists **Alberta authorized student and teacher resources**, most of which are available for purchase from the LRC.

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca

- The **Alberta Education Web site** contains information on learning from the early years to adulthood.

Curriculum Content—Deciding What Students Should Learn

The Alberta curriculum strives to:

- reflect the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes that Alberta students need to be well prepared for future learning and the world of work
- anticipate and plan for the needs of the future by considering the changes and developments in society such as trends in employment, globalization and advances in technology
- incorporate values of good citizenship and respect for different languages and cultures
- consider students' needs and abilities—intellectual, social, emotional and physical—at different ages and stages of growth
- ensure that each grade provides a foundation of knowledge for successful learning in subsequent years
- incorporate new discoveries and theories that are generally accepted by experts in subject areas
- develop skills that are necessary for success in learning a subject
- consider new research on proven teaching methods and how students learn best
- reflect the most appropriate level at which the skills are to be acquired
- integrate how the study of a subject contributes to student personal growth and development
- accommodate learning in different environments
- consider various ways of delivering a program to students, including new technologies and use of community resources such as distance learning and workplace learning.

Curriculum Development—Who Is Involved in the Process?

Alberta Education takes a lead role in developing and revising provincial curriculum. However, many others, including teachers, principals, parents, education experts, post-secondary institutions, elders and community members, play a vital role in the process. Input from various stakeholders ensures that curriculum continually meets the needs of students and that there are smooth transitions from grade to grade and to post-secondary education and the world of work.

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Ensuring Curriculum Is Current

Curriculum must provide students with the knowledge and skills needed for the present and future. It is reviewed regularly and changes are made to keep it current and relevant. Curriculum revisions occur only after extensive consultations with education stakeholders.

Alberta Education plans any curriculum changes well in advance to minimize any impact on schools, teachers and students. This ensures that school authorities have sufficient time to prepare for the changes and purchase any needed resources.

Revising Curriculum

If it is determined through the regular review process that there is a need to make minor or major revisions to a subject area in the curriculum, education stakeholders play a major role in the process. Alberta Education conducts initial consultations and prepares a draft *Program of Studies* for that subject area. The draft is shared with a wide variety of education stakeholders through advisory committees, online feedback forms, conferences and presentations to teacher specialist councils. Teachers play a vital role in the process. They use their practical knowledge about a subject and about students' needs at specific age levels to provide input and feedback during the process.

Implementing Curriculum

The draft *Program of Studies*, developed in consultation with education stakeholders, is referred to the Minister of Education for approval. Schools may have the opportunity to pilot the program for one year prior to full provincial implementation. This transition year gives schools time to prepare for the new curriculum. When a curriculum is implemented province-wide, all schools must teach the new curriculum. Alberta Education, in partnership with superintendents, boards, teachers, principals, parents and students, shares roles and responsibilities in the effective implementation of a new curriculum.

Alberta Education supports school authorities by producing teacher resources that provide ideas for lesson planning, instructional strategies and student assessment. Also, it provides orientation for school authority leaders and lead teachers about curriculum changes and shares updates at professional conferences and in-services.

http://www.arpdc.ab.ca

Professional development funds are provided to six Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia. Each Regional Consortia organizes and provides activities to respond to in-service needs identified locally. This may include information and orientation sessions related to curriculum revisions.

http://www.lrc.education.gov.ab.ca

Alberta Education also provides funding to help schools purchase learning and teaching resources through the Learning Resources Centre. These resources are designed specifically to support the provincial curriculum.

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Aboriginal Education

Aboriginal peoples throughout the province have indicated they want their children to complete regular school requirements and achieve the same standards as set for all students in Alberta. Alberta Education shares this goal with parents.

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/aborigin/default.asp

The term "Aboriginal" refers to First Nations, Métis and Inuit. To support the learning of Aboriginal students, schools are encouraged to use learning resources that promote Aboriginal perspectives. All students in Alberta should understand and be aware of Aboriginal history, culture, lifestyles and heritage. The First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) initiative works to infuse Aboriginal perspectives into the existing Kindergarten to Grade 12 programs of study. The First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) Education Policy Framework (2002) provides further information on this initiative. Student and teacher resources have been developed by Alberta Education to support the inclusion (or infusion) of Aboriginal content in teaching and learning.

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/nativeed/nativepolicy

Both provincially and locally authorized Blackfoot and Cree language and culture courses are offered in the province.

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/specialneeds/teacherresourcesceat.pdf

A Handbook for Aboriginal Parents of Children with Special Needs provides information to assist Aboriginal parents in working with schools to meet the special education needs of their children. This resource is available for purchase from the LRC.

http://www.lrc.education.gov.ab.ca

Our Treasured Children is a videotape that complements *A Handbook for Aboriginal Parents of Children with Special Needs*. It highlights intergenerational stories from members of the Aboriginal community. The videotape is available for purchase from the LRC.

Daily Physical Activity

Starting in September 2005, school authorities shall ensure that all students in grades 1 to 9 are physically active for a minimum of 30 minutes daily through activities that are organized by the school. Daily Physical Activity (DPA) is based on the belief that healthy students are better able to learn and that school communities provide supportive environments for students to develop positive habits needed for a healthy, active lifestyle.

Schools have the responsibility of creating and nurturing a learning environment for students that supports the development of the lifelong habit for daily physical activity and for healthy lifestyles. The daily physical activities offered in your school should:

- vary in form and intensity
- take into account each student's ability
- consider resources available within the school and the larger community
- allow for student choice.

Parents can assist implementation of DPA and enhance the health benefits received by students through a supportive home environment; e.g., encouraging your child to be active every day, walk your child to school or facilitate a walking school bus program at school.

http://www.paguide.com

For further information and ways to increase physical activity at home, visit the Public Health Agency of Canada's Web site.

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Supports for Learning

Students have individual learning needs. Schools, supported by Alberta Education, provide a variety of programs and services to meet the individual needs of students.

English as a Second Language

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/ESL/default.asp

Many children born in Canada have a first language other than English, and many students move here from non-English speaking countries. Schools provide additional assistance for English as a Second Language (ESL) students in Grade 1 to Grade 12. This helps them acquire sufficient fluency in English so they can function in the regular classroom as quickly as possible.

Special Needs

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/specialneeds/

The *School Act* specifies that school boards are responsible for determining if a student is in need of a special education program. Students with special education needs, including those with mild, moderate and severe disabilities, and those who are gifted and talented, require specialized learning opportunities in order to receive an education that is consistent with their identified learning needs. School boards must provide special education programming for all school-age children with special education needs.

If you feel your child has learning difficulties, you should talk to the classroom teacher to share knowledge about your child that could assist in determining the cause of these difficulties and in deciding if there are specific teaching and learning strategies that might improve your child's learning. School staff can use a number of informal ways to identify learning needs. If it is apparent that school-based strategies are not enough, the teacher, in consultation with parents, will make a referral for specialized assessment. Your child's teacher or the school principal will have information on the assessment procedures for your area.

For more information on a Review by the Minister, contact the Disputes Management Team Leader at 780–427–7235 or see Policy 3.5.1– Review by the Minister http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/educationguide/pol-plan/polregs/351.asp.

Students with special education needs may require changes to: instruction, assessment strategies, materials and resources, classroom environment, equipment and/or the regular curriculum. In addition, some students may require referral to specialized health-care services.

Most students with special education needs are placed in regular classrooms in their neighbourhood or local schools, and are provided with programming, supports and services to meet their individual needs throughout the school day. There are a range of programming options possible—different students need different kinds of support. Deciding on the educational programming for an individual student is a collaborative process and in most instances, parents and school staff agree on appropriate placements. If there is a disagreement, parents can appeal a decision at the district level. The school principal can provide information on the appeal procedure in your district. If parents do not agree with the decision of an appeal to the school board, they may write to the Minister of Education and ask for a review of the board decision.

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All students with identified special education needs require an individualized program plan (IPP). An IPP is a plan of action with measurable goals. It identifies your child's specific strengths, needs and current level of performance. The IPP also explains what your child will be learning and how he or she will be learning. The IPP is a flexible tool that is updated regularly. Parents, school staff and the student need to work together as a learning team to ensure that the IPP is implemented.

The following resources provide additional information.

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/ParentResources.asp

- *The Learning Team: A Handbook for Parents of Children with Special Needs* (2003) – Information for parents of children with special needs.

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/specialneeds/

- *Standards for Special Education* (Amended June 2004) – Information on the requirements for school boards regarding delivery of education programs and services to students with special needs in grades 1–12.

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/resources/TheJourney/journey.asp

- *The Journey: A Handbook for Parents of Children Who Are Gifted and Talented* (2004) – Information and strategies for nurturing your child's learning and emotional well-being at home, in school and in the community.

The *Handbook for Aboriginal Parents of Children with Special Needs* and *Our Treasured Children* videotape are available for purchase from the Learning Resources Centre (LRC). Order online at http://www.lrc.education.gov.ab.ca/.

- *A Handbook for Aboriginal Parents of Children with Special Needs* (2000) – Information for Aboriginal parents about rights and responsibilities regarding the education of their children with special needs.
- *Our Treasured Children* is a videotape that complements *A Handbook for Aboriginal Parents of Children with Special Needs*. It highlights intergenerational stories from members of the Aboriginal community. The videotape is available for purchase from the LRC.

Distance and Online Learning

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/ltb/

Alberta Education designs and develops a variety of print and electronic learning resources to support distance learning, online delivery and regular classroom programs through the use of modern technologies.

The distance learning resources developed are provincially authorized resources that support educational program delivery in Alberta. For a listing of all distance learning resources available for purchase or study, visit the LTB Resources Available Web page.

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/ltb/400/crslist.html

http://www.lrc.education.gov.ab.ca

For information about purchasing distance learning materials, contact the LRC.

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Digital Resources to Support Curriculum Outcomes

http://www.learnalberta.ca

LearnAlberta.ca is a Web site that provides quality online resources to the Kindergarten to Grade 12 community in Alberta. It is a safe, reliable and innovative collection of learning resources developed by Alberta Education in consultation with stakeholders. Students, teachers and parents can access multimedia learning resources here that are based on Alberta Education curriculum guidelines. A featured resource is the Online Reference Centre, a collection of multimedia encyclopedias in French and Engiish. These reference materials include newspapers, magazines, books, maps, pictures, videos and transcripts suitable for all grades and subject areas.

User ID's and passwords are available from school principals or by emailing: LearnAlberta.Contact@edc.gov.ab.ca

Integrated Occupational Program (IOP)

The Integrated Occupational Program is currently under review. The new sequence of courses, called Knowledge and Employability courses, will be provincially implemented in September 2006.

Revised drafts of the programs of study are available on the Alberta Education Web site.

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/iop/default.asp

The Integrated Occupational Program (IOP) is a program of choice that begins in Grade 8 and continues through Grade 12. Students may enter the program at any time during grades 8 through 12. Students who successfully complete the IOP earn a Certificate of Achievement.

The Integrated Occupational Program (IOP) is a distinctive program for students who learn best through hands-on experiential learning activities, and when the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes is relevant to their personal experiences. Student learning is further enhanced when meaningful connections to the community are made that result in successful transitions from the school to the workplace and responsible citizenship. Community partnerships are integral to all IOP courses and include on- or off-site community/workplace involvement.

IOP consists of academic and occupational components. Students will also take physical education, health and life skills/CALM and complementary courses.

Academic subjects:

- IOP English Language Arts 8, 9, 16, 26, 36
- IOP Mathematics 8, 9, 16, 26
- IOP Science 8, 9, 16, 26
- IOP Social Studies 8, 9, 16, 26

Occupational Component

- Practical Arts 8, 9
- Occupations 16, 26, 36

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/iop/IOPmanual.pdf

For more information, refer to the *Integrated Occupational Program Information Manual for Administrators, Counsellors and Teachers*, 1994. The manual is available on the Alberta Education Web site or for purchase from the LRC

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Assessment

Assessing Student Achievement

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/testing/default.asp

In the classroom, a teacher uses a variety of means to assess students' learning throughout the school year. These assessments are based on the instruction being provided, in order to inform the teacher's planning from day to day. Classroom assessment may serve a diagnostic purpose, indicating students' strengths and weaknesses in specific skill areas. At other times classroom assessment may be formative, indicating how well students have achieved in a unit of study or how well they have achieved to a particular point in the course. At the end of a school year, a teacher also assesses how well the students have achieved the expected learning outcomes in the curriculum for that grade. This type of assessment is designed primarily for reporting purposes. All these classroom assessments are integral to instruction.

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Grade 8

Overview of Grade 8

In Grade 8, students study required subject areas. They also choose optional courses that give them the chance to explore areas of interest and career possibilities. Students have access to 950 hours of instruction during a school year.

In Catholic schools, students participate in a Religious Education Program that is authorized by the Bishop of the local diocese.

The Grade 9 Alberta program of studies for each subject area sets out general outcomes or topics that provide an overview of the important learnings students accomplish. Specific outcomes are included for each general outcome or topic and state in detail the knowledge, skills and attitudes students are working towards achieving.

This handbook contains:

- the general outcomes or topics for each subject area
- selected specific outcomes for most subject areas.

The programs of study, which include all the general and specific outcomes, are available on the Alberta Education Web site or from the LRC.

Required Subject Areas. ***Students take:***					
English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Physical Education	Health and Life Skills
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is integrated throughout English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.					

Optional Courses. ***Students may select from:***					
Career and Technology Studies (CTS)	Fine and Performing Arts	Languages Other than English*	Environmental and Outdoor Education	Ethics	Locally Developed Courses

* Students in French immersion programs and bilingual programs in other languages take English language arts as well as language arts in the target language. Students in immersion and bilingual programs also take a number of subjects in the target language.

New Courses for 2005–2006 School Year:

- Career and Technology Studies (CTS)
  - Management and Marketing (E-commerce)
- Chinese Language and Culture (7–12 course sequence)
- Cree Language and Culture (K–12 course sequence)
- German Language Arts
- Japanese Language and Culture (7–12 course sequence)
- Spanish Language Arts
- Ukrainian Language and Culture (7–12 course sequence)

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Religious Education

Religious education is an essential and integral part of the life and culture of a Catholic school. Through it, students are invited to develop the knowledge, beliefs, skills, values and attitudes needed to build a relationship with God and community through the person of Jesus Christ. Religious education shares the same goals and objectives set forth for all good education, that is, the growth and development of the whole person in all his or her dimensions—physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual.

Religious education has four essential characteristics.

It is **Trinitarian**. It recognizes God as the creator of all things who gives us Jesus. It is Jesus who reveals God to us, and in turn reveals God's Spirit, through whom we understand our faith.

It is based on **Sacred Scripture** through which we hear the mystery of God revealed, the call to be in relationship with God and each other, and we learn how to pray.

It is based on the **life experience** of the students through which they are invited to discern signs of God in their daily lives.

It is presented within the tradition of the **Catholic faith community** which, based on Church teachings, sacramental and liturgical life, provides students with experiences of faith, prayer, love and justice.

With an awareness of the uniqueness of each student and a recognition that religious development takes place through a process of stages and within a community, it is expected that program presentation will vary from place to place to meet the diverse learning and religious formation needs of all students.

The Religious Education Program for elementary and junior high schools is authorized by the Bishop of the local diocese. Some school districts have developed supplementary resources and adapted the program to better meet local needs.

Building on the scriptural themes of Grade 7, the Grade 8 program focuses students' attention on the person of Jesus Christ, revealed as the fullness and perfect image of God. The students reflect on the last part of the Apostles' Creed which is studied as the summation of the faith that has been handed onto us through the Church. They study key aspects of the Sacraments and reflect on the Ten Commandments. They are invited to a meaningful life based on gospel values and morality, a call to hope and personal faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through a study of the various forms of prayer and sacramental celebrations, students are encouraged to make life-affirming choices as a response to Jesus' invitation to live a life of love and service.

Students explore these themes through the study of 8 units:

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Unit 1

We believe in the Holy Spirit.

Starting with the story of Pentecost the students deepen their understanding of the mystery of the Holy Trinity and the action of God in their lives. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit all are empowered to live the Gospel call to love and service.

Unit 2

We believe in the holy Church.

The students are invited to broaden their understanding of holiness and sacrament, and to deepen their awareness of God's presence in signs, symbols and ritual. They study the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation) as calling and empowering us to live in holiness and the Sacraments of Healing (Anointing of the Sick and Reconciliation) as signs of hope and wholeness in the midst of pain, confusion and brokenness.

Unit 3

We believe in one Catholic and Apostolic Church.

The students explore the unity and diversity of the Church. They reflect on the primary mission of the Church to share in the love of the Trinity and by examining different models of the Church come to better understand the richness of its diversity. As members of an apostolic Church the call to love and serve others is lived out and expressed in the Sacraments of Marriage and Holy Orders.

Unit 4

We believe in the communion of saints.

The students examine what it means to live as part of a community, identify those who are part of the community of saints, and reflect on the Christian attitude toward death. Through stories of saints the students are invited to reflect on God's love for them and their call to live the Gospel challenge even in the face of difficulty and hardship, realizing that ultimately each person is called to be a saint!

Unit 5

We believe in the forgiveness of sins.

The students are introduced to the Ten Commandments in terms of the challenges they pose for their lives today. Sin is seen as an abuse of the freedom that God gives us, weakening our love for God and one another and impairing our growth towards wholeness. Conscience is likened to a navigation chart that helps us to do the right thing as we go through life, with the grace of the Sacrament of Reconciliation making it possible for us to re-orient our lives toward God.

Unit 6

We believe in the resurrection of the body.

The students reflect on the human body as a precious gift from God and on their responsibility to care for their body since the way they treat their body affects their relationships with God and with others. In studying the Catholic teaching about responsible sexual conduct the students discuss appropriate and inappropriate expressions of love and affection. The sacrament of Marriage is presented as the context for total, lifelong and life-giving sexual love. Using Gospel stories which touch upon the issue of suffering, guidance is given to help students evaluate attitudes toward suffering and identify Christian ways of responding to pain.

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Unit 7 **We believe in life everlasting.**

The students examine and appreciate the goodness of all creation and express a growing sense of responsibility for stewardship of the earth. By identifying some of the causes and results of violence within their own community students evaluate their attitudes toward violence and seek ways of being peacemakers and agents of justice for all especially for the weak and powerless. The question: "Do I live justly?" is explored by illustrating the relationship between poverty and excess consumption, and discovering how daily decisions about lifestyle affect the global community.

Unit 8 **Amen.**

The students review the Creed in its entirety examining it as both a statement of who we are and who we are called to become as followers of Jesus. Their "amen", their "yes", is both personal and communal and is made possible, reinforced, and lived out, in their participation in the Eucharist. While examining the flow of the Eucharistic liturgy the students discover the purpose and value of each part of the liturgy in relation to their faith and their lives.

As a result of participation in this program, students will:

- demonstrate a familiarity with and an ability to retell key biblical narratives that illustrate God's faithful relationship with a chosen people and the community's response to this relationship
- express connections between the relationships described in biblical events and their own life experiences
- show reverence for Scripture as God's living Word
- define human dignity and express its significance in Christian faith and practice
- name the articles of the Apostles' Creed as a summary expression of the Christian community's relationship with God and articulate some of the meaning of each article
- communicate their faith in ways that show a genuine understanding of the Apostles' Creed
- describe how the Creed is a summary of the faith community's understanding of who God is
- explain how the Creed calls them to make responsible choices and decisions in their everyday lives
- analyze (critique) events and personal decisions in light of a commitment to follow Jesus
- describe the relationship between real-life situations and the baptismal commitment to follow Jesus in the community of the Holy Spirit
- outline the ways that prayer deepens a relationship with God
- pray, using a variety of prayer styles
- participate in traditional forms of Catholic prayer.

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The school, through the Religious Education Program, complements parents in their role as primary and principal educators of their children. Home and family play a vitally important role in the faith development of children. Within the family, seeds of faith are planted. Family relationships and daily experiences are major factors in shaping a child's values, attitudes and Catholic identity. Regular religious practice and the application of classroom learning to daily life are critical parts of religious formation.

Prayer is an integral part of the Religious Education Program and of each school day since intimacy with God is the ultimate goal of Catechesis. Respecting the individual differences of children and our changing human needs, prayer is experienced in many different ways: silent reflection, guided imagery, scriptural prayer, song and formal community prayer. As we enter into prayer, we give praise and thanks for God's loving presence and call upon the Spirit to guide, nourish and empower our lives through Jesus Christ.

Teaching the sacraments occurs within the Religious Education Program. Sacraments celebrate the presence of Christ in our lives. They are effective signs that make God's grace present to us in love, healing and the transformation of our lives. Eucharist and Reconciliation are an essential part of each child's religious formation and a necessary grounding for a mature faith. As with many basic themes, Eucharist and Reconciliation are introduced in Grade 1, but continue to be deepened and intensified in each year thereafter. Children who have not yet celebrated First Communion or First Reconciliation are always welcome to contact their parish to begin their immediate preparation for the sacraments.

The Religious Education Program interprets for the students what the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches about our faith in a manner appropriate to the age and development of the students. Not everything in the Catechism is incorporated because, as the Catechism itself points out, what is taught must be adapted to the "differences of culture, age, spiritual maturity, and social and ecclesial conditions among all those to whom it is addressed" (#24). Specific excerpts are quoted at the end of each theme for the teacher to help root the contents and activities of the theme in Church tradition.

The Religious Education Program is structured around the church liturgical year. This enables students to live and express faith in an integrated way at school, at home and in the parish community.

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Required Subject Areas

The required subject areas are the foundation of the junior high school program.

Required Subject Areas. *Students take:*					
English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Physical Education	Health and Life Skills
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is integrated throughout English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.					

English Language Arts

View the English language arts subject page at http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/english/

View the English language arts digital resources on the LearnAlberta.ca Web site at http://www.learnalberta.ca

There are two basic aims of English language arts. One aim is to encourage, in students, an understanding and appreciation of the significance and artistry of literature. A second aim is to enable each student to understand and appreciate language and to use it confidently and competently for a variety of purposes, with a variety of audiences and in a variety of situations for communication, personal satisfaction and learning.

From Kindergarten to Grade 12, students are developing knowledge, skills and attitudes in six language arts: Listening and Speaking; Reading and Writing; Viewing and Representing. Students learn to compose, comprehend and respond to oral, print and other media texts. They experience a variety of texts from many cultural traditions.

In a Catholic school, students are invited to consider how the knowledge, skills and values studied within the language arts curriculum are integrated with other subject areas, including religious education, and reflect the Catholic identity of the school.

The following learning outcomes are selected from the Grade 8 English Language Arts Program of Studies.

Explore thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences

- seek out and consider diverse ideas, opinions and experiences to develop and extend own ideas, opinions and experiences
- examine and reflect on own growth in effective use of language to revise and extend personal goals
- acknowledge the value of the ideas and opinions of others in exploring and extending personal interpretations and perspectives
- exchange ideas and opinions to clarify understanding and to broaden personal perspectives

Comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, print and other media texts

- use knowledge of authors, forms and genres, developed during previous reading, to direct and extend reading experiences
- take notes, make outlines and use such strategies as read, recite, review to comprehend and remember ideas and information
- choose and use strategies for word identification, vocabulary development and spelling that either build on specific strengths or address areas for improvement
- discuss various ways characters are developed and the reasons for and plausibility of character change

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- compare and contrast the different perspectives provided by first and third person narration
- choose forms or genres of oral, print or other media texts for the particular affects they will have on audiences and purposes

Manage ideas and information

- identify and trace the development of arguments, opinions or points of view in oral, print and other media texts
- select the most appropriate information sources for topic, audience, purpose and form
- record key ideas and information from oral, print and other media texts, avoiding overuse of direct quotations
- make notes in point form, summarizing major ideas and supporting details; reference sources
- communicate ideas and information in a variety of oral, print and other media texts, such as interviews, minilessons and documentaries
- assess the research process, and consider alternative ways of achieving research goals

Enhance the clarity and artistry of communication

- revise by adding words and phrases that emphasize important ideas or create dominant impressions
- vary handwriting style and pace, depending on the context, audience and purpose
- choose an effective format for documents, depending on the content, audience and purpose
- use verb tenses consistently throughout a piece of writing
- use knowledge of spelling generalizations and how words are formed to spell technical terms and unfamiliar words in own writing
- plan and facilitate small group and short, whole class presentations to share information
- present information to achieve a particular purpose and to appeal to interest and background knowledge of reader or audience
- anticipate the organizational pattern of presentations, and identify important ideas and supporting details

Respect, support and collaborate with others

- compare ways in which oral, print and other media texts reflect specific elements of cultures or periods in history
- use inclusive language and actions that demonstrate respect for people of different races, cultures, genders, ages and abilities
- use opportunities as a group member to contribute to group goals and extend own learning
- organize and complete tasks cooperatively by defining roles and responsibilities, negotiating to find the basis for agreement, setting objectives and time frames, and reviewing progress
- evaluate the quality of own contributions to group process, and offer constructive feedback to others; propose suggestions for improvement

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Required Subject Areas. *Students take:*					
English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Physical Education	Health and Life Skills
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is integrated throughout English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.					

Mathematics

View the mathematics subject page at http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/math/

View the mathematics digital resources on the LearnAlberta.ca Web site at http://www.learnalberta.ca

The aim of the mathematics program is to prepare students to:

- use mathematics confidently to solve problems
- communicate and reason mathematically
- appreciate and value mathematics
- commit themselves to lifelong learning
- become mathematically literate adults, using mathematics to contribute to society.

Students learn to use the following mathematical processes:

- communicate mathematically
- connect mathematical ideas to everyday experiences and to other subject areas
- use estimation and mental mathematics where appropriate
- apply new mathematical knowledge to problem solving
- reason and justify their thinking
- use appropriate technologies to solve problems
- use visualization to assist in problem solving, processing information and making connections.

The following learning outcomes are selected from the Grade 8 Mathematics Program of Studies.

Number

- demonstrate a number sense for rational numbers, including common fractions, integers and whole numbers
- apply arithmetic operations on rational numbers to solve problems
- apply the concepts of rate, ratio, percentage and proportion to solve problems in meaningful contexts

Patterns and Relations

- use patterns, variables and expressions, together with their graphs, to solve problems
- solve and verify one-step and two-step linear equations with rational number solutions

Shape and Space

- apply indirect measurement procedures to solve problems
- generalize measurement patterns and procedures, and solve problems involving area, perimeter, surface area and volume
- link angle measures and the properties of parallel lines to the classification and properties of quadrilaterals
- create and analyze design problems and architectural patterns, using the properties of scaling, proportion and networks

Statistics and Probability

- develop and implement a plan for the collection, display and analysis of data, using technology, as required
- evaluate and use measures of central tendency and variability
- compare theoretical and experimental probability of independent events

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Required Subject Areas. *Students take:*					
English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Physical Education	Health and Life Skills
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is integrated throughout English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.					

Science

View the science subject page at http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/science/

View science digital resources on the LearnAlberta.ca Web site at http://www.learnalberta.ca

The secondary science program is guided by the vision that all students have the opportunity to develop scientific literacy. The goal of scientific literacy is to develop the science-related knowledge, skills and attitudes that students need to solve problems and make decisions, and at the same time help them become lifelong learners—maintaining their sense of wonder about the world around them.

The program is designed to help students understand the nature and role of science, as well as develop a solid grounding in science knowledge, skills and attitudes. Throughout the program, students learn that:

- science provides an ordered way of studying the natural world
- scientific discovery often leads to the development of new technologies and new technologies can lead to new fields of scientific investigation
- science takes place in a social context and responds to human needs. Science and technology have both intended and unintended consequences for humans and the environment.

In a Catholic school, students are invited to consider how issues of stewardship, morals, ethics and Catholic teaching can be integrated appropriately into the science curriculum.

Students study five units during their Grade 8 year. The **topics** studied and the **major outcomes** for each are:

Mix and Flow of Matter

- describe fluids used in technological devices and everyday materials
- describe the composition of fluids, and interpret the behaviour of materials in solution
- investigate and compare the properties of gases and liquids
- identify technologies based on properties of fluids

Cells and Systems

- investigate living things and their general structure, function and organization
- investigate and describe the role of cells within living things
- interpret the healthy function of human body systems, and illustrate ways the body reacts to stimuli
- describe areas of scientific investigation leading to new knowledge about body systems and to new medical applications

Light and Optical Systems

- investigate the nature of light and vision
- investigate the transmission of light, and describe its behaviour
- investigate and explain the science of image formation and vision

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Mechanical Systems

- describe and compare mechanical devices that have been improved over time
- analyze machines by describing the overall system, the subsystems and the component parts
- describe the transmission of force and energy between parts of a mechanical system
- analyze the social and environmental contexts of science and technology, as they apply to the development of mechanical devices

Freshwater and Saltwater Systems

- describe the distribution and characteristics of water in local and global environments, and identify the significance of water supply and quality to the needs of humans and other living things
- investigate and interpret linkages among landforms, water and climate
- analyze factors affecting productivity and species distribution in marine and freshwater environments
- analyze human impacts on aquatic systems

The program develops **skills** in four major areas:

Initiating and Planning
Students devise (or make) plans to investigate:

- science-inquiry questions
- practical problems
- science-related issues.

Performing and Recording
Students conduct investigations through:

- observation
- recording data
- researching information.

Analyzing and Interpreting
Students develop, analyze and assess possible explanations through:

- data display
- inference
- evaluation.

Communication and Teamwork
Students work collaboratively to:

- communicate questions, ideas, procedures and results
- evaluate individual and group processes
- defend a position or conclusion, based on their findings.

To support their learning, students are encouraged to develop positive **attitudes** in the following six areas:

- continuing interest in science
- respect for the ideas of people with various backgrounds and views
- support for scientific processes
- collaboration with others
- stewardship for the natural environment
- safety in science.

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Required Subject Areas. *Students take:*					
English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Physical Education	Health and Life Skills
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is integrated throughout English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.					

Social Studies

View the social studies subject page at http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/social/

The aim of the social studies program is to help students gain basic knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to become responsible citizens and contributing members of society. Social studies includes the study of history, geography, economics, the behavioural sciences and humanities.

Grade 8 social studies focuses on different perspectives of economic growth. The content is organized around three topics and in each topic, students are expected to address at least one issue and one question for inquiry.

In a Catholic school, students are invited to consider how issues of social justice, the contribution of the Church to community (locally and globally), and Church teaching can be integrated appropriately into the social studies curriculum.

The following learning outcomes are selected from the Grade 8 Social Studies Program of Studies.

Geography of Canada and the United States

- identify and define the terms regions, location and movement
- understand that people are constantly interacting with their physical environment to meet their needs
- understand that the environment is constantly being changed by human and physical forces
- understand that all places have special human and physical characteristics that distinguish them
- construct maps (including contour maps) demonstrating use of symbols, location, direction, distance, scale and physical geography
- categorize information to develop concepts—regions, location, place, movement, environmental interaction
- appreciate interdependence as a common feature of life.

Canada: History to the Twentieth Century

- understand that colonization was one result of competition between nations for new territory
- explain the process of Canada's growth and expansion
- construct a timeline of major events and contributions of individuals to shaping the political development of Canada
- read and interpret historical maps to uncover the relationships between human and physical geography on the development of the Canadian nation
- develop respect for democratic principles
- consider opinions and interpretations different from their own

South America: A Case Study of Brazil

- identify the major physical features of Brazil
- explain how immigration and settlement patterns have shaped the historical and cultural development of Brazil
- understand the effect human settlement has had on Brazil's physical environment
- understand how the culture of Brazil reflects the variety of origins of its people
- appreciate the ways different economic systems meet the needs of people

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Required Subject Areas. *Students take:*					
English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Physical Education	Health and Life Skills
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is integrated throughout English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.					

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

View the information and communication technology subject page at http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/ict/

Students learn how to use and apply a variety of information and communication technologies; the nature of technology and the importance of technology in daily life. ICT is learned most effectively in the context of subject areas such as language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. The ICT curriculum is not intended to be taught as a stand-alone course but rather to be infused within the teaching of other programs of study.

The ICT Program of Studies is organized by division. The following is a sample of the Division 3 learning outcomes that students are expected to meet by the end of Grade 9.

Communicating, Inquiring, Decision Making and Problem Solving

- evaluate the authority and reliability of electronic sources
- develop a process to manage volumes of information that can be made available through electronic sources

Foundational Operations, Knowledge and Concepts

- explain the issues involved in balancing the right to access information with the right to personal privacy
- recognize that the ability of technology to manipulate images and sound can alter the meaning of a communication

Processes for Productivity

- use advanced word processing menu features to accomplish a task; for example, insert a table, graph or text from another document
- design, create and modify a database for a specific purpose

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Required Subject Areas. *Students take:*					
English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Physical Education	Health and Life Skills
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is integrated throughout English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.					

Physical Education

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/physed/

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/physicaleducationonline

The aim of the K–12 physical education program is to enable students to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to lead an active, healthy lifestyle. Students participate in a variety of physical activities: dance, games, types of gymnastics, individual activities and activities in alternative environments, such as aquatics and outdoor pursuits. All learning outcomes are met through physical activity as a strategy for managing life challenges and fostering a desire in students to participate in lifelong physical activity.

Within Catholic schools, some of the values integrated into the Physical Education program include recognizing the dignity of each person as evident in their unique gifts and talents, community building, cooperation and shared responsibility, respect and care for the body.

The following learning outcomes are selected from the Grade 8 Physical Education Program of Studies.

Activity

Basic Skills

- select, combine and perform specific locomotor, nonlocomotor and manipulative skills, by using elements of body and space awareness, effort and relationships, to improve personal performance

Application of Basic Skills

- select, combine and perform activity-specific basic skills in a variety of games
- be able to identify and evaluate specific strategies and tactics that coordinate effort with others; e.g., team/fair play, in order to achieve a common activity goal

Benefits Health

Functional Fitness

- explain fitness components and principles of training, and formulate individual plans for personal physical fitness

Body Image

- discuss performance-enhancing substances and how they can affect body type in relation to physical activity

Well-being

- analyze the personal effects of exercise on the body systems before, during and after exercise

Cooperation

Communication

- discuss positive active living role models

Fair Play

- demonstrate etiquette and fair play

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Leadership

- describe, apply and practise leadership and followership skills related to physical activity

Teamwork

- identify and demonstrate positive behaviours that show respect for self and others

Do It Daily ... for Life!

Effort

- develop a personal plan that encourages participation and continued motivation

Safety

- appraise or judge movement experiences for safety that promote an active, healthy lifestyle; e.g., safe use of equipment

Goal Setting/Personal Challenge

- evaluate different ways to achieve an activity goal, and determine personal and team approaches that are challenging for both the individual and the group

Active Living in the Community

- analyze community programs that promote a physically active lifestyle

Exemptions from Physical Education

Exemptions from participation in physical education may be given for medical conditions, when accompanied by a medical certificate from a doctor to the principal; for religious beliefs, when accompanied by a statement in writing from the parent to the principal; and where access to facilities is prohibitive. When exemption is granted, activities consistent with the program outcomes should be substituted, where appropriate.

Physical Education Online

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/physicaleducationonline

The Physical Education Online Web site provides a wealth of information to support student learning of the K–12 physical education program of studies. The site is organized into three major sections:

- Program of Studies—The general outcomes and grade specific outcomes for K–12.
- Teacher Resources—Links to authorized resources, the Guide to Implementation, teaching tools, and activities and lessons that address the outcomes for the K–12 physical education program.
- Home Education—This portion is designed for parents and teachers to use with students who may be enrolled in an online or home education physical education course.

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Required Subject Areas. *Students take:*					
English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Physical Education	Health and Life Skills
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is integrated throughout English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.					

Health and Life Skills

View the health and life skills subject page at http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/healthpls/

The aim of the health and life skills program is to enable students to make well-informed, healthy choices and to develop behaviours that contribute to the well-being of self and others. A comprehensive health program involves a partnership among home, school and community.

In a Catholic school, learning outcomes are addressed within the context of the teachings of the Catholic Church. The local boards of many Catholic school jurisdictions have approved supplementary resources and adapted the curriculum to better meet the needs of their students, their families and their faith communities.

The following learning outcomes from the Health and Life Skills Program of Studies are taught from a Catholic viewpoint and perspective.

Wellness Choices

Personal Health/Safety and Responsibility

- make responsible and informed choices to maintain health and to promote safety for self and others. God gives us the gifts of life and health; we are called to care for and respect these precious gifts

Relationship Choices

Understanding and Expressing Feelings/Interactions/Group Roles and Processes

- develop effective interpersonal skills that demonstrate responsibility, respect and caring in order to establish and maintain healthy interactions. The glory of God is in fully alive people who revere the dignity that all persons share by virtue of being created in God's image and likeness

Life Learning Choices

Learning Strategies/Life Roles and Career Development/ Volunteerism

- use resources effectively to manage and explore life roles and career opportunities and challenges. Our Christian vocation is to use our gifts, talents and the resources available to us in building God's reign of peace and love by serving others

Human Sexuality Education

Human sexuality education emphasizes the individual nature of change and growth, and the importance of one's family and personal values with respect to sexuality and sexual decision making. Learning outcomes are addressed within the context of Catholic teaching.

Schools are required to offer human sexuality education in Grade 4 to Grade 9. Parents have the right to exempt their child from this instruction. Schools will provide alternative learning experiences for those students who have been exempted from human sexuality instruction.

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Optional Courses

In addition to required subject areas, junior high schools must offer a minimum of two provincially authorized optional courses. Optional courses are designed to reinforce learnings in core courses and to provide opportunities for students to explore areas of interest and career possibilities.

The range of optional courses offered varies from school to school depending on such factors as student and parent preferences, facilities and staffing.

Optional Courses. ***Students may select from:***					
Career and Technology Studies (CTS)	Fine and Performing Arts	Languages Other than English	Environmental and Outdoor Education	Ethics	Locally Developed Courses

Career and Technology Studies (CTS)

View the career and technology studies subject page at http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/cts/

View the Multimedia CTS Project on the LearnAlberta.ca Web site at http://www.learnalberta.ca/

Career and Technology Studies (CTS) is an optional program designed for Alberta's secondary school students. CTS helps junior high and senior high school students to:

- develop skills they can apply in daily living now and in the future
- investigate career options and make effective career choices
- use technology (processes, tools and techniques) effectively and efficiently
- apply and reinforce learnings developed in other subject areas
- prepare for entry into the workplace or further learning.

The CTS curriculum is organized into 22 strands. Each strand represents a group of courses designed to support broad career and occupational opportunities. Courses are the building blocks for each strand, and they define what a student is expected to know and be able to do.

The 22 Career and Technology Studies program strands are:

Agriculture
Career Transitions
Communication Technology
Community Health
Construction Technologies
Cosmetology Studies
Design Studies
Electro-Technologies
Energy and Mines
Enterprise and Innovation
Fabrication Studies
Fashion Studies
Financial Management
Foods
Forestry
Information Processing
Legal Studies
Logistics
Management and Marketing
Mechanics
Tourism Studies
Wildlife

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Optional Courses. *Students may select from:*					
Career and Technology Studies (CTS)	Fine and Performing Arts	Languages Other than English	Environmental and Outdoor Education	Ethics	Locally Developed Courses

Fine and Performing Arts

View the fine arts subject page at http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/finearts/

Through the Fine and Performing Arts courses of Art, Drama and Music, students develop self-awareness and express their creativity in many ways. They will respond personally and critically to a variety of art, drama and music styles and forms.

In a Catholic school, students are invited to consider how the knowledge, skills and values studied within the fine arts curriculum can be used to understand the religious dimensions of art, liturgy, music and history. They are also used directly to enhance the religious and spiritual culture of the school, and to celebrate the various liturgical feasts of the year.

Art

Students learn how to use traditional and contemporary tools, materials and media to express their feelings, think like artists, value the art creation and value the art form. Three areas form the framework of the junior high school art program:

- Drawings—recording, investigating, communicating, evaluating and articulating aspects of making images
- Compositions—organizations, components and relationships involved in the creation of images
- Encounters—looking at images and artifacts, finding ideas for making art, learning about the art of other times, changing imagery, and learning to understand and appreciate the purposes and effects of art

Drama

Drama encourages students to explore a variety of dramatic roles and develop a range of dramatic skills. In the junior high school drama program, students learn about drama and theatre through:

- Movement—physical, nonverbal expression
- Speech—exploration of talking and speaking to communicate ideas effectively
- Improvisation/Acting—acting out an idea or situation
- Theatre Studies—an introduction to the elements of drama and theatre
- Technical Theatre—stage construction and the use of sound, lighting, makeup, costumes, sets and props.

Music

Instrumental music, choral music and general music are the three distinctive, yet related, programs in the junior high school music curriculum. Development in any of these programs requires student involvement as a performer, listener and composer. Five main goals of the junior high school music program are to:

- develop skills in listening to, performing and reading music
- strive for musical excellence
- understand, evaluate and appreciate a variety of music styles
- develop self-expression, creativity and communication through music
- increase awareness of the history of music and the role of music in own lives.

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Optional Courses. *Students may select from:*					
Career and Technology Studies (CTS)	Fine and Performing Arts	Languages Other than English	Environmental and Outdoor Education	Ethics	Locally Developed Courses

Languages Other than English

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/languages/ToolKit.asp

A variety of courses and programs in languages other than English are available throughout Alberta. Some of these include Aboriginal languages, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Ukrainian.

Students registered in an **immersion** or a **bilingual program** follow a language arts course in the target language (e.g., French, Ukrainian) in addition to studying English language arts. In these programs, the target language is also used as the language of instruction in other subject areas, such as mathematics, science and social studies.

Aboriginal Languages

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/aborigin

Blackfoot and Cree language and culture programs are designed to enable students to learn Aboriginal languages and to increase awareness of Aboriginal cultures.

The following learning outcomes are selected from the Blackfoot and Cree Language and Culture Programs of Study.

- learn basic communication skills in Blackfoot or Cree
- develop cultural sensitivity, and enhance personal development
- develop a desire to extend or improve proficiency in the Blackfoot or Cree language

French Immersion Program

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/quicklinks/seclang.asp

In Alberta, many students have the opportunity to study in a French immersion program. This program, designed for non-French speaking students, offers an effective way for students to become functionally fluent in French while achieving all of the learning outcomes of the regular programs of study. Graduates from French immersion programs achieve a level of fluency in the target language that allows them to pursue their post-secondary studies in French or to accept employment in a workplace where French is the main language of communication.

There are many delivery models for French immersion present in Alberta schools.

- Early immersion—students begin their immersion experience in Kindergarten and continue in the program to Grade 12.
- Late immersion—the entry point is typically Grade 7.

Courses offered in the French language have as their basis a French version of the English language programs of study, which is identical or comparable to the one used in the English language programs. However, a program of studies specific to French immersion students was developed for the learning/teaching of French language arts. Some of the main French language arts learning outcomes are presented in the following section, French Language Arts.

A resource that may be helpful to parents is *Yes, You Can Help! Information and Inspiration for French Immersion Parents*. It is available for purchase from the LRC.

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French Language Arts

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/French/FLA/abrege/8IMM.pdf

At the junior high school level, the French language arts program of studies is intended to continue work started at the elementary level, including vocabulary and syntax enrichment, to enable students to engage more actively and effectively in proposed activities. Students become aware of elements that ensure message clarity, such as exact, precise expressions and words, and correct, increasingly complex sentences. They learn to respect the basic rules of language in the oral exchanges that take place in the classroom as well as in their writing projects.

The acquisition of a solid language basis allows students to better understand, clarify and express abstract thoughts. The program of studies also targets the development of the students' ability to plan and monitor their communication projects, whether they are working individually, with classroom partners, or participating in activities organized by the Francophone community. Students become more aware of factors that influence the way they communicate effectively in various contexts.

In **oral comprehension**, students learn to pay particular attention to the organization of a message (text structure and genre) and to their knowledge about the author, producer or broadcast to guide them in their listening. They learn to question their attitudes toward the task and the means they use to overcome difficulties.

In **reading comprehension**, students develop their reading ability by analyzing the task at hand and choosing the best way to tackle more complex passages. They improve their ability to analyze text characteristics for better understanding of internal organization (text structure and genre) and the author's intent.

In **oral production**, students learn the vocabulary and syntax that will enable them to express themselves in various contexts. They develop the ability to plan group projects and to interact effectively with their peers.

In **writing**, students gradually learn to develop a work plan that will enable them to complete their writing project more efficiently. They learn to organize and express their ideas clearly, while still respecting the rules of internal text organization and spelling. They also learn to edit their texts using various reference works.

Note: The development of basic language skills does not take place in isolated exercises, but rather in context, so that students learn not only the rules but also when and how to apply them.

In Grade 8, learning occurs primarily:

In **oral comprehension** through:

- group work situations
- listening to texts from various subject areas
- listening to newspaper and magazine articles, short stories or chapters from novels
- listening to audiotapes, such as documentaries
- viewing audiovisual materials.

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Students learn to examine the factors influencing the listening situation and become aware of their attitude toward the tasks.

In **reading comprehension**:

Teachers will select:
- descriptive texts
- information and opinion texts
- texts from the imaginary world; e.g., cartoons, poetry and song.

To develop reading strategies, students learn to tackle texts taking into account their organization (e.g., descriptive) and develop various ways of annotating texts.

In **oral production**:

The proposed situations should allow students to demonstrate what they already know, what they have learned about a given subject, or to express their opinions based on examples from their readings and discussions. The topics chosen for the presentations may be from another area of study. Students should have had the opportunity to explore topic-related vocabulary in various contexts.

The presentations and discussions should be well structured, with emphasis on:
- the use of expressions or words to describe events and their experiences
- the following sequence: *subject noun (or subject pronoun) + complement pronoun – verb*
- the present subjunctive.

Emphasis on *discussion* enables students to continue developing their ability to interact with peers. Students are required to agree on the operational rules of the group as well as on their roles and responsibilities with respect to the task.

In **writing**:

Students learn to write texts in which they pay particular attention to the structure and organization of information. They also learn to write short stories in which they establish links between the feelings of characters and their actions.

The main purpose of these learning activities is to enable students to integrate the basic elements of the written language:
- the selection of a text structure consistent with their communicative intent
- the organization of ideas according to a plan—introduction, development and conclusion
- the recognition and correction of syntactic Anglicisms
- the use of present subjunctive
- the verb agreement when the subject and verb is followed by a "screen" (words in apposition) or when the subject is *qui*
- the agreement of subject and verb in the present conditional and simple future
- the position of the direct or indirect personal pronouns in declarative and interrogatory statements in simple tenses
- punctuation
- spelling.

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French as a Second Language

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/fsl

In Alberta, French as a Second Language (FSL) is a course sequence in which the French language is taught as a subject to help students develop communication skills in French and acquire an appreciation and understanding of Francophone cultures.

Currently, the province of Alberta supports the implementation of FSL on an optional basis to schools and school boards. Once the Languages Initiative is implemented, FSL will become compulsory or optional according to school board policy and decisions.

The program is designed to teach students to:

- understand what they hear and read in French
- communicate their ideas orally and in written form, using an approach that is based on concrete and real-life experiences and situations
- acquire knowledge about local, provincial, national and international Francophone groups in order to become more aware of their presence and to understand them better
- develop French language vocabulary and grammar through thematic activities, tasks and projects that are related to real-life language experiences
- acquire specific language learning strategies that will help them become better second language learners.

The FSL course sequence is grade-level based. Each grade plays an important role in the student's ability to develop and apply their communicative and strategic skills and their language and cultural knowledge.

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/french/FSL/whatsnew/FSL_handbook/definition.htm

A resource that may be helpful to parents is *French as a Second Language (FSL) Program: A Guide for Parents*. It is available on the Alberta Education Web site or for purchase from the LRC.

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German Language and Culture

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/languages/default.asp

This new three-year course sequence is designed to develop linguistic and cultural proficiency in German and a global perspective.

The following outcomes cover four areas of languages and culture development:

Applications
Students will use German in a variety of situations and for a variety of purposes.

- to receive and impart information
- to express emotions and personal perspectives
- to get things done
- to form, maintain and change interpersonal relationships
- to extend their knowledge of the world
- for imaginative purposes and personal enjoyment

Language Competence
Students will understand and produce German effectively and competently in spoken and written forms.

- interpret and produce oral texts
- interpret and produce written texts, graphics and images
- attend to form
- apply knowledge of how discourse is organized, structured and sequenced in German
- apply knowledge of the sociocultural context

Global Citizenship
Students will acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be effective global citizens, through the exploration of the cultures of the German-speaking world.

- historical and contemporary elements of the cultures of German-speaking peoples
- affirming and valuing diversity
- personal and career opportunities

Strategies
Students will know and use various strategies to maximize the effectiveness of learning and communication.

- language learning
- language use
- general learning

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Italian Language and Culture

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/languages/default.asp

This new three-year course sequence is designed to develop linguistic and cultural proficiency in Italian and a global perspective.

The following outcomes cover four areas of languages and culture development:

Applications
Students will use Italian in a variety of situations and for a variety of purposes.

- to impart and receive information
- to express emotions and personal perspectives
- to get things done
- to form, maintain and change interpersonal relationships
- to extend their knowledge of the world
- for imaginative purposes and personal enjoyment

Language Competence
Students will use Italian effectively and competently.

- attend to form
- interpret and produce oral and written texts
- apply knowledge of the sociocultural context
- apply knowledge of how the Italian language is organized, structured and sequenced

Global Citizenship
Students will acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be effective global citizens, through the exploration of the cultures of the Italian-speaking world.

- historical and contemporary elements of Italian-speaking cultures
- affirming and valuing diversity
- personal and career opportunities

Strategies
Students will know and use strategies to maximize the effectiveness of learning and communication.

- language learning
- language use
- general learning

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Spanish Language and Culture

This new three-year course sequence is designed to develop linguistic and cultural proficiency in Spanish and a global perspective.

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/languages/default.asp

The following outcomes cover four areas of languages and culture development:

Applications
Students will use Spanish in a variety of situations and for a variety of purposes.

- to receive and impart information
- to express emotions and personal perspectives
- to get things done
- to form, maintain and change interpersonal relationships
- to extend their knowledge of the world
- for imaginative purposes and personal enjoyment

Language Competence
Students will use Spanish effectively and competently.

- attend to form
- interpret and produce texts
- apply knowledge of the sociocultural context
- apply knowledge of how text is organized, structured and sequenced in Spanish

Global Citizenship
Students will acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be effective global citizens, through the exploration of the cultures of the Spanish-speaking world.

- historical and contemporary elements of Spanish-speaking cultures
- affirming diversity
- personal and career opportunities

Strategies
Students will know and use strategies to maximize the effectiveness of learning and communication.

- language learning
- language use
- general learning

Ukrainian Language Arts

This course is designed as the Ukrainian language learning component for students in the Ukrainian bilingual program.

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/languages/default.asp

Students acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and representing. They learn to use Ukrainian confidently and competently in a variety of situations for communication, personal satisfaction and further learning. They are able to explore, understand and appreciate the Ukrainian culture for personal growth and satisfaction, and to participate in and contribute to an interdependent and multicultural global society.

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Ukrainian as a Second Language

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/languages/uk2l.pdf

This program is designed for students who wish to learn to communicate with others in Ukrainian and to preserve Ukrainian language and culture. The program begins in Grade 7 and continues through to Grade 12.

The following learning outcomes are selected from the Ukrainian as a Second Language Program of Studies.

- use appropriate social conventions
- ask information about another person, and relay that information
- carry out commands
- express actions in the negative
- ask and tell where people and objects are located, where one lives, simple directions
- ask and tell what one wants to do or needs to do
- count from 1 to 100; and recognize, orally, the ordinal numbers 1 to 10
- ask and tell the parts of the day, days of the week, seasons of the year

In a Catholic school, both within the Religious Education Program and along with the study of the Ukrainian language, many aspects of the life and faith of the Ukrainian Catholic Church are studied and celebrated.

Other Languages

Many school boards have developed their own programs. Locally developed language programs include: Arabic, Chinese, Chipewyan, German, Hebrew, Italian and Polish. These locally developed courses are based on local needs and demands, and may not always be available.

For more information on second language instruction offered in your area, please contact your local school board.

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Optional Courses. *Students may select from:*					
Career and Technology Studies (CTS)	Fine and Performing Arts	Languages Other than English	Environmental and Outdoor Education	Ethics	Locally Developed Courses

Environmental and Outdoor Education

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/others/eoed.pdf

In environmental and outdoor education, students develop interest and competence in outdoor studies and develop an understanding of their relationship to the environment. Environmental and outdoor education can be offered as a single course or as a sequence of courses, and includes:

- the basic knowledge, skills and attitudes required for safe and comfortable experiences
- awareness and appreciation of living things
- understanding of basic ecological processes
- skill, judgement, confidence and sensitivity in a range of environmentally responsible activities in outdoor settings
- lifestyle strategies that encourage responsibility for local and global environments.

Ethics

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/others/jhethics.pdf

The ethics course is designed to help students become contributing, ethical and mature persons, and may be offered in Grade 7, Grade 8 or Grade 9. The aim of the course is to help students become more thoughtful, to think of the interests of others, and to see ethical implications in their daily lives. The ethics course includes:

- working definitions of ethics and values
- decision-making skills
- historical values and traditions
- values of different cultural groups
- responsibility to community.

Locally Developed Courses

School boards may develop and/or acquire courses that are innovative and responsive to local and individual needs. Contact your local school board to get information about locally developed courses available in your jurisdiction.

Note: *Policy 1.2.1—Locally Developed/Acquired and Authorized Junior and Senior High School Complementary Courses* is currently under review.

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Personal and Career Development

Preparing for life and work is a complex process that begins in the early years of schooling and continues throughout our lives. Alberta schools are taking an active role—along with parents and the community—in helping students move successfully from basic education to further studies and the workplace.

In junior high school, students begin linking their personal aptitudes and goals to possible future careers. They continue to develop life skills, including such employability skills as cooperating with others and being reliable. At this stage, students begin to outline their own learning and career goals.

Personal and career development activities and outcomes are integrated into all junior high school courses and programs. The following junior high school programs focus specifically on these topics: Health and Life Skills, Physical Education, Career and Technology Studies (CTS) and work study.

Many junior high schools organize special career development activities, such as mentoring, job shadowing, portfolios and annual career fairs. Junior high schools encourage students to develop a career plan. Plans should be updated annually and signed by parents and principals. Students typically develop a personal portfolio, including a résumé, and may use a career planner such as the *Middle/Junior High School Student Learning–Career Planner* developed by Alberta Education.

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/cardir_jr.pdf
[pdf version]

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/JHPlan.doc
[word version]

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/cardir.pdf

The *Student Learning–Career Planner Information Booklet* and the *Middle/Junior High School Student Learning–Career Planner* are useful tools for Alberta's secondary school teachers and guidance counsellors as they work with students, parents and other key partners to help students move through the career planning process. The information booklet and junior high school planner are available on the Alberta Education Web site or for purchase from the LRC.

Planning for Senior High School

During their junior high years, students make decisions about their senior high school program. It helps to keep in mind that:

- strengths, interests and realistic career paths play a major role in decision making
- specific courses are required for an Alberta High School Diploma or Certificate of Achievement
- knowledge of course sequences is important, because many courses require prerequisites.

Guidance from the school and classroom teacher is available. Planning for senior high school is more effective when students and parents are familiar with requirements and work closely with teachers.

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/math/whatsnew/intro.asp
http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/parents/handbooks/
View *A Credit to Yourself: Planning Your Senior High School Diploma Program*, May 2003 at http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/other.asp

Alberta Education provides information on planning for senior high school through a variety of resources, including the following:

- *Senior High School Mathematics Programs: Revised Handbook for Parents and Students*
- *Curriculum Handbooks for Parents: Senior High School*
- *A Credit to Yourself: Planning Your Senior High School Diploma Program*, May 2003

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Feedback Form

Curriculum Handbook for Parents 2005–2006: Grade 8

Catholic School Version

Please indicate whether you are a:

☐ Parent ☐ Teacher ☐ School Administrator ☐ District Administrator ☐ Other (please specify) _____

Please indicate whether you used:

☐ a print copy ☐ the online format ☐ both

Please respond to the following by placing a check mark under **Strongly Disagree**, **Disagree**, **Agree** or **Strongly Agree**.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The handbook provides useful information.				
2. The amount of information is appropriate.				
3. The reading level is appropriate.				
4. The layout and organization are user-friendly.				
5. The links to the Alberta Education Web site are helpful.				
6. Downloading and printing is easy.				

How can this handbook be made more helpful to parents?

_____

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_____

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_____

Thank you for your feedback.

Please send your response to:

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